

The Accomplishment of Confidence in the Triple Gem (*Saddhā-sampadā*)

The main purpose of everyone is happiness. Our real happiness completely depends on how far we have purified our mind. Hence purifying one's mind is one of the main teachings in Buddhism (*Sacittapariyodapanam*). Purifying one's mind depends on reducing negative or evil thoughts from our mind. In this situation, Buddhism emphasizes the importance of getting rid of negative thoughts, namely, greed, anger and delusion. On the other side, it is essential to develop positive thoughts such as generosity, loving kindness and wisdom. Here, the confidence (*Saddhā*) in the Triple Gem, i.e., the Buddha, His teaching (the Dhamma) and His noble disciples (the Sangha) is the major point that determines how skillful we are in the pursuit of Enlightenment. *Saddhā* should be accompanied from the beginning to the very end of the path of purification. When we practice Buddhist doctrines, our confidence gradually increases because we see the results throughout our lives. Simultaneously, when confidence in the Buddha's message grows up, the energy also upturns since our inner peace grows up.

If someone hopes to go on the path of purification with practicing Buddha's message, he or she should develop the quality of confidence gradually. Confidence is the first step in every religion. The difference of Buddhism is it never says '**come and trust or believe**, it says '**come and see**' to each and every one. To achieve confidence, listening to what the Buddha taught is very important. The reason is confidence increases according to our knowledge and understanding in the worldly reality what Buddhism describes. That is why the Buddha said,

One who sees the Dhamma sees me; (*Yo dhammam passati so mam passati*)

One who sees me sees the Dhamma (*Yo mam passati so dhammam passati*).

Seeing the Buddha and seeing the Dhamma are interrelated. The more we learn what the Buddha taught, the more we are confident in the Buddha. At the beginning of the path of liberation, confidence can arise by seeing or hearing something in Buddhist tradition. Further, it increases by listening to the Buddha's real message (which relates to understand the Karmic law and the Dependent Origination) and associating with the Buddha's noble disciples. Depending on our knowledge about our mind, body and the word according to the Buddha's message, we can go forward with confidence. Generally, we can explain confidence as the faith in the Triple Gem i.e., Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. More exposure to the noble qualities of The Supreme Buddha, His teachings (*Dhamma*) and His noble disciples (*Sangha*) along with motivation and positive attitude can be called confidence in Buddhism. Especially, the confidence in Buddha's Enlightenment is the key to cultivate all the qualities of Enlightenment (*Saddhahati tathāgatassa bodhim*).

The disciple of the Noble One is endowed with verified faith, confidence and conviction in the Awakened Buddha as follows; Such, indeed, is the exalted one: Worthy (*Araham*), supremely enlightened (*Sammāsambuddho*), Endowed with knowledge and conduct (*Vijjacaranasampanno*), well gone (*Sugato*), Knower of the world (*Lokavidu*), Incomparable trainer of persons to be tamed (*Anuttaropurisadammasārathi*), Supreme teacher of gods and men (*Satthā devamanussanam*), Enlightened (*Buddho*) and Exalted (*Bhagavā*). Understanding these qualities leads to develop confidence in the Buddhahood and go on the path of liberation. Furthermore, contemplating on the qualities of the Buddha is one of the techniques to purify one's mind and achieve tranquility. It has been explained as a river of merits (*Puññābhisando*)

With the understanding and confidence of the Buddha's Enlightenment, the disciple is endowed with verified faith, confidence and conviction in the Dhamma as follows; The Dhamma is well expounded by the Blessed One (*Swākkhato bhagavathā dhammo*), directly visible (*sanditthiko*), immediately effective (*akaliko*), inviting one and each to come and see (*ehipassiko*), leading onwards (*opanayiko*), to be personally experienced by the wise (*paccattama vekitabbo vinnuhi*). According Buddhism, contemplating on the qualities of the Dhamma is also a technique to purify one's mind and achieve tranquility.

With the confidence on the Buddha and the Dhamma, the disciple becomes clever with verified faith, confidence and conviction in the Noble Sangha as follows; perfectly trained is this noble Sangha community of the Buddha's Noble disciples: Trained in the right way, the true way, the good way, the direct way! Therefore these 8 kinds of individuals, these four noble pairs, deserve both gifts, grants, sacrifice, offerings, hospitality and reverential salutation with joined palms, since this noble Sangha community of the Buddha, is an unsurpassable and forever an unsurpassed field of merit for this world, to honor, respect, support, offer and protect. contemplating on the qualities of the Sangha is also another technique to purify one's mind and achieve tranquility according to what the Buddha taught.

This confidence is not a blind faith. It depends on the understanding of Buddha's message. The more we listen to the Buddha's words, the more we are confident and happier. Buddhism explains confidence as a great wealth (*saddhā dhanam*). If we are rich in material wealth, we are rich in happiness. However, that happiness can be changed instantly because it is material, but the wealth (treasure) of confidence is not like that. It doesn't change when material richness changes. *Saddhā* will not die along with the physical body. If we have strong confidence on the Buddha, his teachings and his noble disciples, our mind is full with satisfactoriness and happiness always. Then negative thoughts such as anger, greed, ignorance and jealousy has no place in our mind. Also, positive thoughts such as loving kindness, compassion, generosity and wisdom gradually develop in our mind.

The Buddha says understanding of suffering causes to increase the confidence. If someone has the knowledge about arising of suffering as per the Buddhist perspective, his confidence will gradually increase. At the very beginning, he understands that when we do some

unwholesome deeds with wicked mind in our life, we will have the bad results (disadvantages) not only here after but in this life itself as well. Also, we will have the good results of good deeds. If a person has this knowledge, he doesn't like to suffer anymore, as he is intelligent. That is why he motivates himself to get rid of evils and cultivate good in his life, as soon as he can. This is the nature of the confidence in the Dhamma. Therefore, Buddhism says that **all good qualities which are wholesome, depend on confidence** (*Saddhā mulikā sabbepi kusalā dhamma*).

If we believe in Buddha's message, we believe in destiny or *karmic law*.

Then we don't do any evil (unwholesome deeds) and cultivate good (wholesome deeds).

Furthermore, we try to get rid of suffering and try to find real happiness purifying mind.

Buddhism continually emphasizes the importance of confidence on the Triple Gem (*saddhā*) because it is an essential quality that we should develop.

Saddhā is the seed (*saddhā bijam*), the initiator, and thus the source at the beginning.

Saddhā is the hand that takes up all the advantageous mental states.

Saddhā is the wealth (*saddhā dhanam*) above all, since it brings real and lasting happiness.

Saddhā is the jump (*saddhāya tarati ogham*), since it enables beings to cross the flood of pain.

Saddhā is the accomplishment (*Saddhā Sampadā*)

Saddhā is the purifier, since it cleans pollutions of the mind.

Further the Buddha explains in **Kitāgiri Sutta** (MN) the importance of confidence as a part of the gradual path. *And how is final knowledge achieved by gradual training, gradual practice, gradual progress? Here one who has confidence in a teacher visits him; when he visits the teacher, he pays respect to the teacher; when he pays respect the teacher, he gives ear; one who gives ear hears the Dhamma; having heard the Dhamma, he memorizes it; he examines the meaning of the teachings he has memorized; when he examines their meaning, he gains a reflective acceptance of those teachings; when he has gained a reflective acceptance of those teachings, zeal springs up in him; when zeal has sprung up, he applies his will; having applied his will, he scrutinizes; having scrutinized, he strives; resolutely striving, he realizes with the body the supreme truth and sees it by penetrating it with wisdom.*

Whenever someone thinks about the Buddha's enlightenment, his teachings and his noble disciples, his mind is very pure, calm and happy. At that moment, mind doesn't have greed, anger or delusion, and also, at that time mind has supreme happiness. Hence having the refuge of the triple gem brings us invaluable wealth because the main purpose of earning wealth is happiness. The confidence in the Buddha's enlightenment, his sublime teachings and his disciples are interrelated. If there is one, it influences others too. The center of these three things is the understanding of what the Buddha taught the path to overcome suffering. These three things give us a real refuge, protection and security to prevent our mind from negative thoughts which disturb our peace of mind.

Material Gems are valuable things which bring happiness to people, but they give only some facilities to help in this life. Sometimes material gems bring us fear, doubt, suffering, lamentation and pain to our lives. Also, those gems can't help us to overcome our suffering like aging, death and rebirth. Further, material gems can be stolen any time or destroyed. One day surely, we have to leave them whether we like or not. The triple gem, the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, are concerned in Buddhism as refuge to overcome all kinds of sufferings of beings. Nobody can steal or destroy them. If we can get the real refuge by the triple gem, that refuge helps us in this life and in the entire Sansāric journey. That is why the threefold gem is called as priceless gems which help us to achieve real happiness. Confidence in the triple gem (*Saddhā*) leads to understand our lives and guides us to overcome suffering. Also, confidence is the main root of all spiritual developments (*Saddhā mulikā sabbepi kusalā dhammā*). This confidence is the seed of wholesome acts (*Saddhā bijam*). Contemplating on the triple gem purifies mind from negative thoughts like craving, anger and delusion. Pure mind brings us happiness overcoming all sufferings.

Saddhā is one of the main spiritual faculties. When we practice confidence towards the Triple Gem, other spiritual qualities will also develop within us. As much as we have confidence in the Triple Gem, it is able to develop four other spiritual qualities i.e., energy (*Viriya*), mindfulness or awareness (*Sati*), concentration or tranquility (*Samādhi*) and wisdom (*Paññā*) for the success of our spiritual life.

Furthermore, if we have knowledge about suffering as the Buddha mentioned, our faith in Buddha improves. Especially, when we see the arising and ceasing of the five aggregates, we can see the way to get rid of suffering. The nature of practicing Buddha's message is to have directly visible results.

To cultivate *saddhā* we have to acquire four other qualities. They are;

1. Associating good friends (*Sappurisa sansevo* - සප්පුරිස සංඝේවෙථ)
2. Listening to the Buddha's message to cease suffering (*Saddhamma savanam* – සද්ධම්මසවණං)
3. Wise reflection (*Yoniso manasikāro* – යෝනිසෝ මනසිකාරෝ)
4. Practicing accordingly (*Dhammānudhamma patipatti* – ධම්මානුධම්මපටිපත්ති)

It is so beneficial to listen to the Buddha's message again and again for the clear knowledge to grow this confidence strong about the three refuges and to go forward on the path of purification. Here, it is very important to listen to the main doctrines in Buddhism as the Four Noble Truths, The Fourfold Mindfulness, The Dependent Origination, The Three Characteristics, The Five Spiritual Faculties and The Eightfold Path. The more we develop our knowledge, the more we clear our vision and understanding. It is very useful to go forward on the path of purification seeing the impermanence. By contemplating on the qualities of the triple gems we

are inspired and encouraged to go forward on the path of liberation. Also, reflecting on qualities of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha are meditation techniques those can be used to train our mind for mindfulness which leads to concentration. When mind is concentrated, the world reality (or wisdom) is understood as it is. Hence, the triple gems can be used as a refuge, meditation and a motivation on the path of enlightenment.

From the beginning to the end of the path of purification we have to develop these qualities again and again every moment with alertness and understanding. The more we practice we can see more and more result in this life itself. Developing mindfulness with wisdom while seeing the worldly reality such as impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and egolessness is the ultimate goal of practice. Final result of practicing them is the liberation from all sufferings and living with the highest contentment. Hence saddhā plays the highest role in understanding Buddhism.

May the Triple Gem Bless You!

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May All Beings be Well Happy and Peaceful!

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